



The Explorations of Pere Marquette

Jim Kjelgaard

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How big was this New World? Was it just a narrow strip of land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans? In 1670 no one knew the answers to these questions. Perhaps the settlers on the east coast were too busy to spend much time wondering. It was not so with Jacques Marquette, the missionary from France. Almost as great as his love for the New World was his curiosity about it. Wondering about its size was not enough for him. He set out to learn for himself. From the Indians he discovered that there was a Big River to the west. Perhaps this Big River, that some tribes called the Mississippi, emptied into the Pacific Ocean. If he found that it did, what a great discovery that would be! Jim Kjelgaard, in *The Explorations of Pere Marquette*, tells the story of the missionary's travels and discoveries. Along with it he gives us vivid pictures of life among the Indians. Traveling with Pere Marquette are the laughing, hardy voyageurs whose knowledge and skill made his explorations possible. Here, too, is Louis Joliet, Marquette's good friend and companion in discovery. The exploration of the Mississippi River by Marquette and Joliet was a long step forward in the growing knowledge of the New World. To read about it in Jim Kjelgaard's story is to relive the wonder that the discoverers must have felt as they pushed their canoes down waterways that had never before been seen by white men.

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Harriet Blum:

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